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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PRAGUE 000045

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EUR/ERA JGIAUQUE, EUR/NCE FOR ATRATENSEK

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SUBJECT: CZECH COMMENTS IN ADVANCE OF THE JANUARY EU GAERC

REF: STATE 7679

Classified By: POLEC Counselor Michael Dodman for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (SBU) Summary: Emboff met with Veronika Musilova, who serves in the Czech MFA Department of Common Foreign and Security Policy, to discuss the January 28-29 EU General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) issues. Of note were her comments on the EU's approach to Serbia/Kosovo, the EU election observer mission to Pakistan, Kenya and the GOCR plans to keep pressing on Burma.

Kosovo - Seeking to Avoid Perception of Influencing Serbian Presidential Election

2, (C) According to Musilova, Serbian President Tadic has reached out to several EU member states to request that the EU avoid "announcing" any position or language on Kosovo which could inflame nationalist sentiment in Serbia and thus negatively influence the Serbian presidential election on February 3. Musilova indicated that the EU is thus likely to emphasize EU interest in supporting Serbia's path to EU integration and avoid making statements on Kosovo. She also indicated that while the technical details of the ESDP mission have been agreed, the EU does not plan to publicize this fact next week.

13. (C) Regarding Serbia's path to integration, the EU plans to highlight the Visa Facilitation Agreements, which came into effect January 1, 2008. Musilova indicated that these agreements will benefit ordinary Serbians because they lower the cost of visa applications for everyone and even abolish a fee for certain categories, such as students. While the Czechs would like to see the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) signed soon, Musilova does not expect this to occur at the GAERC. She indicated that certain EU member states remain opposed to action on the SAA until Serbia fully cooperates with the ICTY (Note: Musilova cited the Netherlands, Belgium and one Scandinavian country as forcefully arguing this position).

Pakistan - EU Engaged in Election; Examining the Long-term Picture

14. (SBU) According to the Czechs, the EU election observation mission (EU EOM) analysis of the current situation/preparations in Pakistan is "not flattering." It notes media access problems, restrictive language governing

the rules on contesting election results as well as technical and administrative weaknesses at the Pakistan electoral commission. The EU plans to fully staff this mission with a total of 100 long and short-term personnel. The mission plans to release preliminary and final reports on the election, once it occurs. The election is just one of multiple issues which the EU believes need to be addressed in Pakistan; Musilova cited terrorism, and border provinces as two examples and indicated that the EU Political Directors are exploring the possibility of a troika on Pakistan this spring to explore such issues.

Burma - Czechs Working for Substantive February Discussion

16. (C) The GOCR appreciates our shared commitment to keep Burma in the news. Musilova acknowledged that while Burma is not on the GAERC agenda, the Czechs, Brits, Dutch, Irish and Danes have been pressing for the EU to do more. With Kosovo likely to consume a fair portion of their time next week, in consultation these members decided to press for a substantive discussion of the situation in Burma at the February GAERC. Given Foreign Minister Schwarzenberg's particular interest in human rights in Burma, the GOCR is exploring separately the possibility of hosting a seminar on Burma or a meeting between UN Burma Envoy Gambari and EU Special Envoy for Burma Fassino. The GOCR noted that these ideas are only at the exploratory stage at the MFA; they promised to keep us apprised of developments.

Kenya

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17. (SBU) While not on our list of GAERC agenda items, Musilova indicated that the situation in Kenya will be discussed. Following EU Development Commissioner Louis Michel's trip to Kenya on January 19, the EU plans to call for calm and emphasize support for former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's mediation efforts. Musilova indicated that the EU may also weigh the possibility of targeted visa restrictions or the suspension of future development assistance.

ESDP Mission to Chad - Moving Forward

18. (SBU) According to the GOCR, the technical documents are in order and they are likely to be approved next week. Apparently though, identifying where the reserve forces would come from has been a bit of a problem. It appears that the battlegroup will be designated for this role although many officials are unhappy with this solution as the battlegroup is not meant for this type of work.
Graber